



OFFICE OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**MINUTES OF THE FIRST PUBLIC HEARING
ON THE CITY OF CENTRAL FALLS APPLICATION FOR CDBG FUNDS**

Tuesday, August 11, 2014

Call to Order

The hearing was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Acting Director of Planning and Economic Development Peter Friedrichs.

Public Hearing

Acting Director Friedrichs informed those present of the City's ability to apply for \$450,000 in Housing and Urban Development: Community Development Block Grant funds through the state's office of Housing and Community Development. He directed those in attendance to the OHCD website <http://www.planning.ri.gov/community/development/blockgrants/> for additional information regarding the range of activities that may be undertaken. The three-most recent applications were made available to attendees to understand the past use of funds and its relationship to local community development objectives. It is estimated that all activities will benefit persons of low and moderate income. There is not intent to displace persons as a result of activities with Community Development funds.

Acting Director Friedrichs opened the hearing to testimony from members of the community.

Bianca Policastro, Director of Program Planning and Development for Blackstone Valley Community Action Program, stated that BVCAP is interested in the City applying for the CDBG grant, with special interest in title 1 and title 2 activities. Ms. Policastro expressed concern for the increasing dropout rate in central Falls, and a recent change in policy towards dropout and expressed a desire on the part of BVCAP to use CDBG funds to expand access to education for the residents of Central Falls who have dropped out of school.

Andrew Pierson, Pawtucket-Central Falls Development, expressed an interest in the City applying for CDBG funds. Mr. Pierson stated that while there has been great work in improving housing in Central Falls, there are still areas with foreclosed and abandoned properties that are in need of redevelopment, for which CDBG funds are needed to proceed.

Heiny Maldonado, Fuerza Laboral, expressed excitement at the prospect of the City applying for CDBG funds to help those of low and moderate levels of income, which Fuerza Laboral works extensively with.

Joseph Keough, Vice President of the Pawtucket Soup Kitchen, expressed interest on behalf of the Soup Kitchen in any assistance that the soup Kitchen could get in helping the urban poor in the city through CDBG funds.

Kevin Cunha, Chief Operating Officer of the Center for Dynamic Learning, expressed interest in CDBG funds aimed towards education, to improve youth education in technology and other skills and use CDBG funds to help train the youth of the community who will not be attending college and get them into trades and other career paths.

Ashley Belanger, Executive Director of The Rhode Island Urban Debate League, along with PJ Fox from the Institute for the Practice of Nonviolence, asked the city consider investing in its young people. The RI Urban Debate league proposed a new partnership between the City, the Institute, and the Debate League to empower young people to use voice and debate to discuss issues and influence the community and advance nonviolence in the community.

CITY OF
CENTRAL FALLS



STATE OF
RHODE ISLAND

OFFICE OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Adjournment

Acting Director Friedrichs closed the hearing at 4:30 pm after the final testimony was received.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Friedrichs
Acting Director
Department of Planning and Economic Development